

Select Board Members

Peter Hood, Chair

Mary Just

Skinner,

Vice Chair

Phil Hyjek

Steve Martin

Liz Scharf

MIDDLESEX SELECT BOARD
Tuesday, March 30, 2021
SPECIAL MEETING
REMOTE VIA ZOOM
Middlesex Town Clerk's Office
5 Church Street
Middlesex, Vermont 05602
(802) 223-5915

MINUTES.

PRESENT: Peter O. Hood, Chair, Mary Just Skinner, Vice Chair. Members Steve Martin, Phil Hyjek and Liz Scharf. Treasurer Dorinda Crowell. Planning Commission Chair Sandy Levine, PC members Theo Kennedy and Mitch Osiecki who is also Recreation Director. Juli Beth Hinds and Russ Bennett of Planetary Matters. Select Board Assistant Sarah Merriman took the minutes and the meeting was recorded by ORCA.

Approving an Application to US Rep. Peter Welch for Federal Funding of Village Sidewalks Project

Sandy said she learned on March 16 about the opportunity to apply for one of ten projects for federal funding with a submission deadline of March 31. She said she's been working with Juli Beth Hinds to put together the application. This might bring the project of a recreation path behind Planetary Matters along the river to fruition. This would be easier since the path would be on private property and would not involve VTrans. Sandy said she's received many letters of support for the project, including one from Red Hen. All the work must be completed by the end of 2022.

If received, the federal grant would require a match from the Town of Middlesex, she said. The application seeks \$300,000 in federal funding with a \$23,000 town match. Liz noted the budget was \$1.5 million for everything. Sandy said this would pay for the actual path along the river. The sidewalk would be designed, but not constructed because there are too many steps. Liz asked how long the design for the remainder of the project would last. Juli Beth said the State and the CVRPC have been put on notice that Middlesex has a lot of initiative. With a potential increase in transportation funding, it's a good time to be poised to go forward with this kind of project. She also said the Town would need a bond vote since there's a 20% match, at least 10% of which would be required to come from the Town. Also, Middlesex might want to consider creating a tax district. She said by April 16, the Town will know if it's a top-ten project. The final answer would be June or July. Vermont is allowed 10 requests. It's unclear which of those will be funded.

Sarah spoke in opposition, citing the radon levels in Town Hall and the crumbling highway department as more pressing concerns. The voters will be burnt out if they'll be asked to approve a bond for the Village project along with possible bonds for a new Town Hall and new Town Garage.

Theo said the projects are not incompatible. This is an amazing opportunity that's too good to miss. Liz said she's in favor of applying for the grant, but that there was minimal support for sidewalks during a recent survey of Middlesex residents. Dorinda said even if the sidewalks were 100% free, sidewalks will require long-term care. First, we need to

decide whether we want sidewalks before we spend \$23,000, she said. Theo said none of the issues should get in the way of what an amazing opportunity this is. Peter asked if it would be possible to rework the application to omit the sidewalks.

Juli Beth said no because what will rise to the top are projects that will be transformative. The money would be used for more than sidewalks – it would transform the Village to make it safer. Peter said he's worried about going ahead with this project while there are other pending capital concerns. Russ encouraged the Town to go forward. Peter said the town should just go forward with mitigating radon regardless. Liz said she's in favor of submitting the application since funding like this doesn't come around often. However, be aware that the Town voters may not vote to go forward, ultimately. Mary spoke in support. Steve did as well, but agreed with Liz that ultimately the voters may not support this project. Phil said the money is here and agree that this is a unique opportunity.

MOTION: Phil moved and Mary seconded submitting the application for this federal funding. The motion passed. Sarah will write a letter on Town letterhead noting the Board's support to include in the application. Juli Beth, Russ, Theo and Sandy left the meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

MOTION: Steve moved and Phil seconded appointing Middlesex Conservation Commission member Dell McDonough and Jon Udis as Town representatives to the Central Vermont Solid Waste District Board. The motion passed.

MOTION: Phil moved and Liz seconded reappointing Mitch as Recreation Director. The Board encouraged Mitch to submit a report with his hours to enlighten the Board about what he's doing as recreation director. The motion passed.

MOTION: Mary moved and Steve seconded approving renewal of The Filling Station's 1st and 3rd class liquor licenses. The motion passed.

MOTION: Steve moved and Phil seconded moving approval of the March 2, 2021 Select Board minutes. The motion passed.

MOTION: Steve moved and Phil moved to approve the March 16, 2021 Select Board minutes. The motion passed.

Two orders were signed.

Dorinda said the Highway Department needs an all-in-one printer with a toner. Phil encouraged everyone to update their new email addresses. The Board decided to schedule a Special Meeting on April 13th to discuss the Middlesex Fire Department.

The meeting adjourned at 6:15 PM

Respectfully submitted by Sarah Merriman, Town Clerk/Select Board Assistant

THE ABOVE MINUTES WERE REMOTELY APPROVED AS A WARNED AGENDA ITEM AT A REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING OF THE MIDDLESEX SELECT BOARD ON APRIL 6, 2021.

PETER O. HOOD, CHAIR

MARY JUST SKINNER, VICE CHAIR

PHILIP HYJEK

STEVEN MARTIN

ELIZABETH SCHARF

DRAFT